

Advanced Placement (AP) OSPI Program Brief

Program description:

This program allows students to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school. Students may earn college credit and/or advanced placement into upper-level college courses by taking AP exams. Many colleges and universities recognize AP courses when making admissions decisions.

Advanced Placement is a rigorous academic program built on the commitment, passion, and hard work of students and educators from secondary schools and higher education. With 34 courses in a wide variety of subject areas, AP provides willing and academically-prepared high school students with the opportunity to study and learn at the college level.

Through AP courses, certified AP teachers help students develop and apply the skills, abilities, and content knowledge they will need later in college/university. Each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college/university course, and college and university faculty play a vital role in ensuring that AP courses align with college/university-level standards. For example, through the AP Course Audit, AP teachers submit their syllabi for review and approval by college/university faculty. Only courses using syllabi that meet or exceed the college/university-level curricular and resource requirements for each AP course are authorized to carry the AP label.

Advanced Placement courses culminate in a suite of college/university-level assessments developed and scored by college and university faculty members, as well as experienced AP teachers. AP exams are an essential part of the AP experience, enabling students to demonstrate their mastery of college-level course work. Strong performance on AP exams is rewarded by colleges and universities worldwide. More than 90 percent of four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant students credit, placement, or both on the basis of successful AP exam scores. However, performing well on an AP exam means more than just the successful completion of a course; it is the gateway to success in college. Research consistently shows that students who score a 3 or higher typically experience greater academic success in college and improved graduation rates than their non-AP student peers (Source: The College Board).

Participating schools include:

CEDARS reports that three hundred and twelve (312) Washington high schools participated in the AP program during 2012–13. This was an increase of 36 schools over 2011–12.

Benefits for students and system:

- Statistically, AP completers are more likely to graduate from college.
- Lessens time to degree completion and reduces college/university tuition costs.
- Improves quality of curriculum, as teachers' syllabi are audited by college/university professors.
- Advanced Placement tests provide students with nationally recognized and normed feedback.

- Provides students a chance to try college/university-level coursework while still in high school with teacher and parent support.

Student responsibilities:

- Students must be willing to undertake the challenge of difficult work.
- Students will be graded as though they are in a college/university course.
- Students may take the AP exam in May.

Cost(s) to students:

OSPI has participated in the federal AP Test Fee Program grant since 1999. Through this program, test fees are reduced for qualifying low-income students eligible for AP testing offered through the College Board and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). This opportunity is funded through the federal [AP Test Fee Payment Program](#) for low-income students. This program is authorized by the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I Part G](#).

Advanced Placement reimbursements are paid directly to the College Board rather than through grants to public or private schools. The current national fee per examination is \$89. The total student fee is reduced through a series of waivers to \$10 for qualifying low-income students.

Number of students currently participating:

According to data reported in CEDARS, 48,540 Washington public school students were enrolled in AP courses during the 2012–13 school year.

Profile of students:

There has been a 7.3 percent increase in the number of exams taken by Washington students from 2011–12 to 2012–13. In the spring of 2013, 69,582 tests were administered to 40,616 Washington Students, a 5.7 percent increase in test takers from the previous year according to College Board data.

Findings:

College Board Findings

- The College Board reports that over 41,518 AP examinations taken by Washington students during 2012–13 demonstrated college-level mastery by earning scores of three or higher. This represents an increase of 6.6 percent from 2011–12.
- Of the total number of Washington exams, 59.7 percent received scores of three or higher.
- Of AP test takers, 36.8 percent self-reported as non-White an increase of 8.7 percentage points over 2011-12
- In 2013, AP exam scores of three or higher increased for all populations, most dramatically 21.7 percent for American Indian students, 13.3 percent for Hispanic students, and 11.1 percent for Black students.
- Over the past five years, the number of AP test takers in Washington has increased by 25.6 percent.
- Of the test takers, 55.4 percent are female.

CEDARS Findings

- The total number of 9th graders enrolled in AP courses has increased by 941 (98.8 percent) between 2011 and 2013
- The total number of Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in AP courses has increased by 832 (18.4 percent) between 2011 and 2013
- The total number of Bilingual students enrolled in AP courses has increased by 9 (2 percent) between 2011 and 2013
- The total number of Free/Reduced Meal program students enrolled in AP courses has increased by 31,812 (17.3 percent) between 2011 and 2013

Web resource(s):

OSPI/Advanced Placement (AP) website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/AdvancedPlacement/default.aspx>

College Board AP Central website: <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Controller.jpf>

State agency contact(s):

OSPI: Barbara Dittrich, Program Supervisor, Advanced Placement

barbara.dittrich@k12.wa.us

(360) 725-6097

Other program contact(s):

Nancy Potter, K-12 Education Manager, the College Board

npotter@collegeboard.org

(425) 643-7989